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Security Council

Fifty-fourth Year

Provisional

4000th Meeting

Saturday, 8 May 1999, 3.40 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Dangue Réwaka	(Gabon)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Petrella
	Bahrain	Mr. Buallay
	Brazil	Mr. Moura
	Canada	Mr. Fowler
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Malaysia	Mr. Rastam
	Namibia	Mr. Andjaba
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Slovenia	Mr. Türk
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Burleigh

Agenda

Letter dated 7 May 1999 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1999/523)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 7 May 1999 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1999/523)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Albania, Belarus, Cuba, India, Iraq and Ukraine, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Nesho (Albania), Mr. Sychou (Belarus), Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba), Mr. Sharma (India), Mr. Hasan (Iraq) and Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): I have received a request dated 7 May 1999 from Mr. Vladislav Jovanović to be allowed to address the Council in the course of its discussion of the item on its agenda. With the consent of the Council, I would propose to invite him to sit at the Council table and to make a statement.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Jovanović took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in response to the request contained in a letter dated 7 May 1999 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, document S/1999/523.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank you, Sir, for having convened this meeting at such a late hour. I also thank the members of the Council for attending this emergency meeting, called at my request.

First, I wish to read out a statement issued by the Chinese Government:

> "At midnight on 7 May, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), led by the United States of America, flagrantly attacked the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, launching three missiles at it from different angles. The attack resulted in serious damage to the Embassy premises. As of now, two people have died, two are missing and more than 20 injured.
>
> "The flagrant bombing of Yugoslavia by NATO, led by the United States of America, over the past 40 days has already claimed an enormous number of casualties among innocent civilians. Now, NATO has gone so far as to bomb the Chinese Embassy. This action represents a gross violation of China's sovereignty and a flagrant flouting of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the basic norms of international relations, a rare occurrence in the history of diplomacy. The Chinese Government and people express their utmost indignation and severe condemnation of this barbaric action and raise the strongest protest against it.
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> "NATO, led by the United States, must assume full responsibility for this action. The Chinese Government reserves the right to take further measures."

The working and residence buildings of the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia — the entire Embassy from the fifth floor to the basement — have been destroyed by the bombing. Everyone in the Embassy, apart from those who have been sent to the hospital for treatment and some others, has been withdrawn to hotels.

We express our utmost indignation and strong condemnation of this incident. This barbaric action of NATO is a flagrant violation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents. Even in times of war, it is internationally recognized that diplomatic institutions are inviolate and

diplomats protected. Any threat to the safety of diplomatic personnel is also a serious threat to the maintenance of necessary and normal international relations. This indiscriminate act constitutes a serious breach of the Convention and a crime of war that should be punished. We strongly demand that NATO carry out an investigation of this serious incident and account for it. NATO must assume all responsibility for this.

We reserve our right to take further action. The frenzied bombardment carried out over the last 45 days by NATO, under the leadership of the United States, has already resulted in enormous casualties involving innocent civilians, and now it has gone as far as to violate a diplomatic mission. This is really shocking.

Once again we strongly demand that NATO immediately and unconditionally stop its air strikes against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Mr. Burleigh (United States of America): We have no confirmation of the facts at this time. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has opened an investigation of the matter. If NATO was responsible for this incident we are deeply sorry. NATO would never target civilians, and NATO would never target an embassy.

But we in this Council must keep our eye on the big picture, and the big picture is this: that one man alone is responsible for this crisis in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and his name is Slobodan Milosevic. NATO is taking action in response to Belgrade's sustained, multi-year, outrageous, unacceptable policies of ethnic cleansing, terrorization and repression of its own citizens in Kosovo. As the world knows, we worked for months and months and months on a negotiated settlement with Mr. Milosevic. He never agreed. And as the world also knows, he triggered a humanitarian catastrophe.

Those are the basic facts and the bottom line. We will continue to press the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia until it agrees to accept NATO's conditions and the G-8 principles. That is the only way out of this current situation.

Again, if NATO is responsible for this, we deeply regret the incident.

I have conveyed my Government's regrets and sincere condolences to Ambassador Qin, and Secretary of State Albright is conveying the same message to the Chinese Foreign Minister.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): In these unconscionable activities in flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is exceeding all limits. Every day we hear reports of further civilian casualties and of destruction of civilian structures, social and economic infrastructure and mass-communications facilities in Yugoslavia. All norms of international law are being flouted.

On 7 May we witnessed a new tragedy: a NATO strike on the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Some of its personnel were killed. Serious material damage was done to the mission.

Russia expresses its deepest condolences to the Government of China and to the families of the victims of the NATO strike. We are outraged by this barbaric action. We are outraged and demand an immediate investigation. The Security Council cannot let this go without consequences.

By now it is clear to everyone that NATO's military adventurism bears absolutely no relation to efforts to protect the civilians in Kosovo and to prevent a humanitarian crisis. In fact, it is quite the contrary: the fate of the Kosovars has become entirely incidental, and the humanitarian banner is being used as a cover for NATO's attempts to destroy the present world order, which is based on respect for international law and for the Charter of the United Nations.

This, in fact, is the big picture, not the fact that one single person is responsible for all of this. How many people must be killed, how many people must be left homeless, how many countries must be destabilized in order to punish one single person?

We appeal to the members of NATO to think before it is too late and to immediately halt their military action which has already brought such untold suffering to hundreds of thousands of people, created a humanitarian catastrophe and thrown Europe backwards into the distant past.

It is essential to shift immediately to a political settlement, as was stated once again on 7 May by the Secretary-General. This is what Russia has advocated from the very beginning of the crisis in Kosovo. We have advocated a peaceful settlement within the context of the

United Nations, and the Russian leadership has been doing all it can to work towards that end.

This goal can and must be reached. However, a necessary prerequisite is halting the NATO strikes immediately.

Mr. van Walsum (Netherlands): As the representative of a country that participates in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air strikes against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, I join the delegation of the United States in expressing our deep regret about the incident involving the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade, likewise on the assumption that the incident will be confirmed to have been caused by NATO action.

Collateral damage is damage caused by bombs or missiles that have gone astray. It is always deplorable, and it is especially disturbing if it entails loss of life among innocent civilians. It is, however, by definition, accidental and not intentional. Accordingly, collateral damage to an embassy building is not essentially different from other collateral damage. As the Embassy was not deliberately targeted, the accident cannot be regarded as a violation of diplomatic immunity, let alone as an attack on the integrity of the country concerned.

All collateral damage is regrettable, and it is a deeply disturbing thought that air strikes in which my country participates have led to loss of life among innocent civilians. It is equally disturbing to realize that Belgrade's ethnic cleansing of Kosovo, which was already well under way by 23 March, has enormously accelerated and intensified since our air strikes began. Yet we do not waver in our conviction that we had no choice but to launch these air strikes after Mr. Milosevic had continued to ignore the Security Council's demands contained in its resolutions of 23 September and 24 October 1998.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Ogata, has confirmed that last year more than a quarter of all asylum requests in Europe were made by people from Kosovo and that up to 23 March her Office was providing assistance to 400,000 people displaced or otherwise affected by fighting inside the province and to 90,000 refugees and displaced people outside Kosovo.

It is true that here are many more refugees today, but no civilized Government could have foreseen the scope, the meticulous preparation and the sheer ferocity of Belgrade's determination to drive out the ethnic Albanians. We cannot be held responsible for the fact that Mr. Milosevic seized this opportunity to accelerate and try to complete his final solution to the Kosovo problem.

We accept our share of responsibility for the tragic events that are occurring in this conflict, but we totally reject any suggestion of equivalence or even comparison between the accidental casualties caused by our air strikes and the systematic killings, executions, rape, physical abuse, intimidation, harassment and burning of houses, for which the regime in Belgrade must assume full responsibility.

Mr. Petrella (Argentina) *(spoke in Spanish)*: The situation that brings us here to the Security Council at this early morning hour is one that does not allow us to remain silent. Allow me therefore to commend you, Mr. President, for the speed with which you convened the Council in response to an urgent request by the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, and for the responsibility and patience with which you have been directing these discussions up to now.

We have listened with great attention to those who have preceded us in speaking about this tragic episode. Undoubtedly, what occurred yesterday at the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade must be profoundly regretted. The loss of the lives of the Chinese diplomats and the physical damage have moved us and have aroused in us a sense of fraternal solidarity with our colleagues. We believe that it would be very useful and necessary to have more information in order to clarify what took place, and that it is therefore important to mobilize an exhaustive investigation.

Moreover, we sincerely hope that the Belgrade Government will put itself in a position to enter into serious negotiations on the crisis in Kosovo, thereby helping the diplomatic initiatives that are being conducted by friendly countries. I have no doubt that that is the sense of the last sentence of the statement made by the Secretary-General yesterday evening.

In conclusion, allow me to extend to the Government and the people of China our profound sympathy and our understanding of their legitimate feelings at this time.

The President *(spoke in French)*: I thank the representative of Argentina for the kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Dejammet (France) *(spoke in French)*: First of all, the delegation of France wishes to express its profound sympathy to the delegation of China. We extend our condolences to the families of the victims and to the authorities of the People's Republic of China. We also associate ourselves with the regret expressed over the tragic event to which the Embassy of China and its personnel in Belgrade have fallen victim. This event is at the moment the subject of an investigation by the authorities of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

France is engaged in an action undertaken with its allies that is aimed at putting an end to the intolerable actions of the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, a policy of deportation that has made it necessary and legitimate to apply the severest measures, including military action.

At the same time, France, which, like all the members of the European Union supports the initiative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations dated 9 April 1999, is working together with its the Russian, American, English, Canadian, Italian, German and Japanese partners to develop a political solution. The meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of our eight countries — which was held the day before yesterday, 6 May — made it possible to adopt general principles for a political solution to the Kosovo problem.

Those principles are as follows: immediate and verifiable cessation of violence and repression in Kosovo; withdrawal from Kosovo of the military, police and paramilitary forces; deployment of an international presence in Kosovo — an effective civil and security presence endorsed by the United Nations that is able to guarantee the achievement of the shared objectives; establishment of a provisional administration for Kosovo, pursuant to a decision by the Security Council, in order to guarantee conditions that will make it possible for all the inhabitants of Kosovo to lead a normal existence in peace; freedom and security for the return of all refugees and displaced persons and unhindered access by humanitarian organizations to Kosovo; a political process leading to the establishment of an interim political agreement, involving substantial autonomy for Kosovo, that fully takes into account the Rambouillet accords, the principles of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the other countries of the region and the demilitarization of the Kosovo Liberation Army; and finally, a comprehensive approach for the stabilization and economic development of the region.

I have cited these principles because it is our desire to arrive at the adoption of a Security Council resolution under Chapter VII that will endorse and adopt these principles for a settlement and that will, we hope, finally make it possible to restore peace and stability to that region in crisis.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): It is indeed dismaying and shocking that just when diplomatic efforts are being consolidated towards a much needed political solution, military action continues to be intensified in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which is resulting in the loss of life and destruction of infrastructure.

We would like to recall the recent successful humanitarian visit of the Reverend Jesse Jackson to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which resulted in the release of the American prisoners of war. Furthermore, the Secretary-General of the United Nations undertook a mission to some North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries and to Russia. All these efforts were aimed at finding a peaceful solution. More importantly, the statement of the G-8 ministers gave us a flicker of hope.

My delegation has on many occasions underscored the fact that continuation of hostilities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia will have unimaginable consequences. Yesterday, the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade was hit. This is a very serious development. Fatalities, serious injuries and missing Chinese diplomats have been reported. We express our profound sympathy and condolences to the Government and people of China. The bombing of the Chinese Embassy could escalate the conflict. We therefore await the results of the reported ongoing investigations by NATO.

My delegation remains convinced that the pain and suffering inflicted on the innocent and unsuspecting Chinese diplomats, as well as other innocents civilians in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, could have been avoided if there were political will for a political solution. We believe that it is still possible and necessary to find a timely political solution. It is imperative that the Security Council becomes actively involved in the search for a political solution. Similarly, the Secretary-General must continue to work towards the cessation of hostilities. We therefore reiterate our call for an immediate end to the bombing in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Only then can diplomacy be meaningfully pursued.

Mr. Fowler (Canada): We are assembled tonight to consider a tragic event, one that has occurred in the context of a military action brought about by a nation's abuse of its own people. As the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) seeks to bring an end to the gross and persistent violence visited upon the Albanian population of the province of Kosovo by a brutal regime in Belgrade, accidents and errors have inevitably and very regrettably occurred. NATO is engaged in an action designed exclusively to stop the Serbian authorities from prosecuting their policy of ethnic cleansing, which has already resulted in two thirds of the population of Kosovo — about a million and a half people — having been expelled from their homes, many suffering much worse fates at the hands of Serb security forces.

Bringing a halt to such action, protecting the people of Kosovo and permitting their safe return are NATO's only purposes. NATO does not attack embassies or target civilians under any circumstances. Canada deeply regrets, therefore, the damage caused to the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Belgrade, which is apparently the result of NATO's air action. Above all, we are saddened by the death of members of the staff of the Chinese Embassy and by the injuries sustained by many others in this most unfortunate accident.

Just a couple of days ago, Foreign Ministers of the Group of Eight, meeting in Germany, produced a blueprint for a possible settlement of this conflict that, by resolution of the Security Council, would end the persecution of the ethnic Albanian population of Kosovo, see the departure from Kosovo of Serb forces engaged in such nefarious activities, facilitate the return of all Kosovar refugees, guarantee their protection through an international civil and military presence in Kosovo, and thus allow the bombing to be concluded.

For the first time in many weeks we have seen the shape of a possible settlement, and we are anxious to pursue it as vigorously as we can. In the meantime, we express our deepest condolences to the people and Government of China over the deaths and injuries they suffered some hours ago.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) *(spoke in Arabic)*: My delegation profoundly regrets the strike on the Embassy of China in Belgrade because of the ongoing war in the Balkans in recent weeks, and we extend our sympathy to the delegation of China. On this occasion, we affirm that the crisis in Kosovo must be resolved by diplomatic means, as has been reaffirmed by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his statement in this connection.

A diplomatic solution must ensure to the Kosovar Albanians all their essential rights to live in dignity, security and stability. In this regard, we affirm the right of all refugees to return to their homes in safety and security.

My delegation encourages all the parties concerned to intensify their efforts to resolve the crisis by diplomatic means as soon as possible. Indeed, every day that goes by without a solution means more victims. As the Secretary-General himself said in his statement during his latest visit to Germany, it is our hope that the chapter on this bloody conflict will come to an end as soon as possible in a way that does justice to the Kosovar Albanians.

Mr. Rastam (Malaysia): The delegation of Malaysia is shocked and distressed to have learned about the tragic incident yesterday involving the loss of lives, injuries and damage to property at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Belgrade, apparently as a result of the ongoing North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) air strikes.

We are deeply saddened that a diplomatic mission has been hit and diplomatic personnel have become victims. Malaysia wishes to extend its deepest sympathy and condolences to the Government of China. We request the Chinese delegation to convey these heartfelt sentiments to the families of the victims and to those who have been gravely affected by this tragic event. We take note that NATO is investigating this incident. We await the results.

The loss of civilian lives and injuries to civilians as a result of the ongoing crisis remains a matter of serious concern to us. Malaysia strongly deplores the humanitarian catastrophe as a result of the continuing crisis in Kosovo. As the crisis drags on, the humanitarian situation has deteriorated further. The serious plight and intolerable suffering of the refugees and internally displaced persons have been well documented. They must be able to return under secure conditions and with dignity.

It has always been my delegation's strong conviction that an urgent political solution to the present crisis in Kosovo must be found. We therefore welcome intensified efforts aimed at reaching an early and comprehensive

political settlement of the crisis. In this regard, we believe the Security Council should be able to exercise its primary responsibility.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): It was with shock and distress that we learned about the tragic events yesterday in Belgrade, which led to the convening of the present meeting of the Security Council. We deplore the tragic incident reportedly caused by a missile which hit the Embassy of China in Belgrade and which caused the deaths and injury of Chinese diplomats and other civilians in the Embassy. We expect that the ongoing investigation by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization will provide additional information with a view to establishing all the relevant facts. Information available at this moment is not yet complete.

I wish to emphasize that Slovenia deplores every instance of loss of life, injury, destruction of property and other consequences affecting civilian populations in armed conflict. We wish to convey our sincere condolences to the Government and the people of China.

The incident addressed today is part of a wider situation. The Security Council is actively seized of the situation in and around Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This is not a new situation. In fact, the vicious spiral of violence started about 10 years ago. The humanitarian consequences of that situation are extremely serious. Council members are aware of the extent of the humanitarian disaster which has recently evolved in Kosovo and which is the result of the systematic policy of ethnic cleansing directed against the Albanian population in Kosovo.

A draft resolution relating to the humanitarian aspects of the situation has been submitted to the Security Council, and we hope that the Council will take action on that draft resolution soon. Furthermore, the Security Council is aware of the efforts of the Secretary-General and of his decision to send a humanitarian-needs-assessment mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, beginning in Kosovo. All these humanitarian efforts are essential. In addition, the Security Council is aware of the diplomatic efforts being made, including those led by the Secretary-General and those of the G-8 member States. All efforts for a peaceful resolution of the situation in and around Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, must continue with vigour and commitment, and the Security Council must be actively involved in this process.

Let me repeat that the spiral of violence in and around Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, started many years ago. It is now high time to take decisive steps towards its resolution and towards the establishment of the foundation for a durable peace.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): We share our colleagues' distress and concern over the tragic incident which caused deaths, injuries and damage in the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade yesterday, and the United Kingdom expresses its sincere condolences to China, to the injured and to the families of those killed.

Let me restate the essential points in this matter. This is a thoroughly unpleasant crisis. More than a million people have been systematically beaten and burnt out of their homes in Kosovo, with several thousand of them killed as a result of President Milosevic's deliberate decisions, and we have not met at midnight over them. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has taken urgent and forceful action to reverse that humanitarian tragedy and to return the displaced to their homes in safety. But we are not in the business of selective concern. We must remember that the people of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia generally have suffered from President Milosevic's policies and are still doing so. He carries the full responsibility for their condition.

So it is tragic that representatives of China should have been caught up by accident in this crisis. NATO has expressed its regrets, and we await the results of its investigation. NATO does not target civilians or embassies. It is a gross distortion to imply that the Chinese Embassy was deliberately attacked.

We are all agreed that the conflict must conclude as soon as possible. The key to that is the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's acceptance of the steps spelt out in the G-8 statement of 6 May, and that key lies in the hands of President Milosevic.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Gabon.

The Gabonese delegation deeply regrets the events that occurred at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Belgrade, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It is extremely important that all measures be taken to ensure the protection of ministries and diplomatic personnel accredited to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as well as their property. We deeply deplore the material damage

and the loss of human life caused by this incident. We extend our sincere condolences to the Government of the People's Republic of China and to the bereaved families. We call on the Belgrade authorities to seize this opportunity offered them by the Secretary-General of the United Nations through his initiative to facilitate a peaceful settlement of the crisis in Kosovo.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

In accordance with the decision taken earlier in the meeting, I now invite Mr. Jovanović to make a statement.

Mr. Jovanović: The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia sent a timely warning to the Security Council of the unforeseeable consequences of the illegal and brutal aggression of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and requested on a number of occasions that the aggression be stopped immediately. If this legitimate request had been heeded, vast human suffering and material destruction would have been avoided.

My country has been a victim of NATO aggression for 45 days now. NATO attacks have been concentrated primarily on civilian targets, threatening lives, the environment and the basic human rights of the entire population of the country. The principle for selecting allegedly legitimate military targets looks like: hit anything, anytime, anywhere. Using over 1,000 planes, NATO has made over 12,000 sorties thus far, has launched over 3,000 cruise missiles and has dropped more than 10,000 tons of explosives. The tragic toll is 1,200 civilian lives lost and the over 5,000 people wounded, many of whom will remain disabled for life.

Can the lost or ruined life of any human being be cynically called collateral damage? Is this term fitting to describe the deaths of over 100 children brought on by NATO bombs? No mention of collateral damage or incidental killings of people and destruction of property is made in the Geneva Convention of 1949 or in the statutes of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Human life has no price tag and cannot be compared to anything else. However, the NATO bombs threaten the lives of the entire population of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Who can live in a country in which houses, bridges, roads, railroads, schools, hospitals, water-supply systems, heating or house appliance plants or public transport are being systematically destroyed? Graphite bombs have short-circuited the power grid of the country, leaving more than 5 million people without power or water and by extension without the most essential provisions. NATO has used weapons banned by international conventions, causing an ecological catastrophe. Over 20,000 cluster bombs have been dropped thus far, while depleted uranium ammunition has also been used. No exception has been made for cultural monuments, cemeteries or memorials to victims of Nazi atrocities in the last war. No army so far has vandalized Serbian medieval monasteries and churches. They survived centuries, eliciting the respect of all except NATO strategists.

The NATO countries, which in their conceit like to think of themselves as standard bearers of democracy and of the right to hold a different opinion, dispatched their planes to drop bombs on television centres in my country, thus committing a crime against freedom of speech and of the media. The buildings of TV Belgrade and TV Novi Sad have been totally destroyed, as well as the Ustje business centre in Belgrade which housed three private television and four radio stations. Scores of television transmitters have been hit too, including the television transmitter on Mount Avala, the largest facility of its kind in Yugoslavia and the beacon above Belgrade which greeted passengers and beckoned to many generations of Yugoslavs from afar that they were coming home at last.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has been committed to a peaceful solution of the crisis in Kosovo and Metohija. I would like to remind members of the Security Council that all activities of the armed forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in Kosovo and Metohija were unilaterally stopped on 6 April, that the Government of Serbia and Yugoslavia has called on all refugees and displaced persons to return home, guaranteeing them safety and security, and that constructive talks were conducted on a number of occasions between the highest representative of Serbia and Yugoslavia and Dr. Ibrahim Rugova. However, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has the right and the duty to protect itself from aggression. The right and the duty are enshrined in the constitution as well as in the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

Yesterday, the aggressors' warplanes targeted and destroyed the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Belgrade. The Embassy was hit by at least two missiles. According to preliminary information, 26 Embassy staff members were wounded, two very seriously, and two persons were killed. The Embassy

building is in the exclusive residential area of New Belgrade. There is no military target around there. The attack is in gross violation of the Geneva Convention of 1949 and of international law. It is, without any doubt, a war crime.

It is more and more evident that NATO is waging a total war against a sovereign country and its people. It is not only Yugoslavia that is targeted, but peace and security in the region as well. The neighbouring countries are already involved in the aggression. The economy of the region is seriously disrupted by the aggression. The main waterway in Europe, the Danube, is out of use. The consequences of the bombing on the region's environment are devastating.

This criminal aggression against Yugoslavia should cease immediately. The Security Council has failed until now to condemn the aggression and to halt the bombing. The entire international legal system is at stake. This morning the Security Council has perhaps the last chance to exercise its duty and reaffirm the authority invested in it by the Charter of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker on my list is the representative of Belarus. I invite him to make his statement.

Mr. Sychov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): Mr. President, I would like to thank you for convening this meeting, to which my Government attaches great importance. I also thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak here.

The Republic of Belarus strongly condemns the illegal, aggressive military actions by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Belarus, which lost every fourth inhabitant in the years of the Second World War, is deeply disturbed to see that the flames of war are heating up again in the centre of Europe. Further escalation of military action, barbaric bombings of industrial, social, cultural and civilian targets and the peaceful population are all assuming horrible proportions.

Yesterday we saw that a diplomatic embassy was hit. The bombing of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Belgrade took human life and brought suffering to completely innocent people. I would like to take this opportunity to convey condolences to the Government of the People's Republic of China, to the families of those who died and to the Chinese diplomats who suffered.

The military actions of NATO are contrary to many international instruments and to the generally recognized norms of international law. In this connection, we call for a halt to this senseless aggression and for an end to this violation of international law by NATO. As we enter the third millennium, the international community has a special responsibility for the future of our planet. The President of the Republic of Belarus and the Government of my country have frequently declared their commitment to a peaceful settlement of this conflict. We believe that today it is still possible to find a diplomatic solution to the situation with regard to Yugoslavia. In this respect, the Security Council has a key role to play in accordance with its powers under the Charter of the United Nations. The United Nations must show the entire world that the ideals of its Charter are paramount.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Iraq. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express our deep condolences to the people and the Government of the People's Republic of China for the victims of the bombing of the premises of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). We condemn this barbaric act, which violates the United Nations Charter, international law and the rules governing relations between countries. We call for the immediate cessation of NATO's military acts.

The targeting of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade and, before that, the severe damage inflicted on the Iraqi Embassy in Belgrade, are yet further manifestations of the aggression of the United States, which started a systematic war against all the people of Yugoslavia on 24 March this year, in a flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the mandate of the Security Council. This aggression coincides with the Anglo-American aggression against Iraq, which started on 16 December last year and which is continuing. This clearly demonstrates the pattern of American behaviour, which flouts international law and the rights of nations and peoples. Earlier, there was American aggression against Libya and then against the Sudan. Who knows which peoples of the third world will be the next victims if the international community does not stand up against the tyranny of the American force?

We deeply sympathize with the people of Yugoslavia, which stands steadfast as it witnesses the achievements of generations being destroyed by the American smart bombs that have spared no school, church, mosque or hospital. We have suffered from the systematic destruction of every area of life in our country by the same brute American force. However, we remained steadfast and emerged victorious to rebuild what they destroyed. The people of Yugoslavia will also remain steadfast and emerge victorious.

We call upon countries that love peace, freedom and justice to learn the right lessons from this continued aggression, which is designed to undermine the territorial integrity of countries and to systematically destroy their cultural achievements. We call upon the international community to unify its efforts to stop the brutal use of force immediately and to punish the aggressor.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Cuba. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Belgrade has been destroyed by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) missiles, causing deaths, disappearances and serious injuries.

The United States and NATO, which refer to civilian dead and wounded as "collateral damage", now cynically declare that the Embassy was not a deliberate target, that it may have been an accident, that they are investigating, that they do not attack civilians and that we must see the "big picture". It is not an accident, but an act of aggression. After one has seen the terrible images traversing the world, there is not much to investigate. Furthermore, there is information that today other civilian targets were bombed.

The Government of the Republic of Cuba forcefully condemns this new act of genocide, which constitutes a flagrant violation of the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China, of the Charter of the United Nations, of international law and of the Geneva Convention.

As José Martí said, the truth must be spoken. The Security Council cannot remain impassive and silent, as though it were unaware that the yesterday's bombings and those of the past 45 days have brought death, injury, hunger, desolation and terror to millions of people.

The hundreds of civilians killed, many of them children, the thousands of civilians injured, the passengers burnt to death in the Grdelica gorge train, the dozens of journalists killed in the bombing of the Serbian television station, the children trapped in the mangled iron remains of the refugee convoy on the Djakovica-Pec road and the people who were travelling in the bus on the Luzane bridge may not for now be present in the records and resolutions, but they are present in the consciences of all of those seated around this table and, more importantly, in the consciences of those peoples that feel — rightly, in almost every case — that this place has little to do with their lives and aspirations.

The United States and NATO are deliberately using technologically advanced weapons in order to interrupt the supply of energy for health services, water supply and food production, as though they were unaware that they would cause humanitarian consequences by cutting off electricity, heating, communications, energy and transport, by destroying civilian facilities that provide essential services to the population, information sources and the livelihoods of the population and by engaging in psychological warfare.

Residential buildings, hospitals and health centres, schools, old-age homes, historical monuments, churches, places of worship and works of art have been destroyed. Civilian targets have been intentionally attacked, with prior knowledge that they were occupied by civilians and that those attacks would result in their deaths. This is a gross violation of the Geneva Protocols and international humanitarian law.

How is it possible that the Security Council does not at least call for a cessation of the brutal bombing against the peoples of Yugoslavia when considering this subject? Can anyone believe the refrain that the war is not against the Serbian people? NATO, headed by the United States, is committing acts of genocide. The genocide must stop.

The attacks in recent hours on the Chinese Embassy and on civilian targets show that there has been no progress at all towards a political solution, despite what is being said. Actions speak louder than speeches and papers. How can the Group of 8 agreement be considered acceptable if that agreement begins by ignoring the main cause of the tragedy, which is the NATO bombing? There can be no just or worthwhile agreement unless the aggression, acts of genocide, bombing of civilian targets and the systematic attempt to deprive a nation of its means of subsistence are first brought to an end.

As President Fidel Castro has said in recent days,

> "Our opinion is that only a political solution is possible in that situation, not a military one, and that it must be based on respect for the rights of all the countries of the region, their religions, and their ethnic groups and cultures — a solution for both Serbs and Kosovars. I have the complete conviction that this problem will not be resolved through the use of force. I have the complete conviction that all military technologies are dashed to pieces against the will of any people that is resolved to fight. It is my conviction that there is no alternative but to seek a political solution and that such a solution is possible using a little common sense and reason."

I can assure the Council that the Cuban diplomats who remain in and move around everyday in Belgrade are qualified as witnesses to what is now occurring.

Cuba hopes that the Security Council will act immediately in accordance with its responsibilities and that it will resume its role under these exceptional and emergency circumstances. If it does not do so, the damage to international order, to the collective security of States and to the United Nations will be irreparable. The historical responsibility will be enormous if the Security Council continues to allow itself to be subordinated, sullied and scorned.

It is the task and unique duty of the Security Council to regain the powers and mandates assigned to it by the Charter. Its most urgent and important task is to halt the genocide and stop the NATO bombings. Having accomplished that, its task will then be to find the path towards a just and dignified political solution that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and all the States of the region.

Cuba hopes that the Security Council will neither accept nor endorse any project that is based on force, inequality or pillage; that it will neither accept or endorse a discussion of the elements of a peace process under NATO bombardment; and that it will neither accept nor endorse any agreement before halting the genocide. Failing this, the Security Council will have to be counted not only among the victims, but also among the accomplices.

Let us hope that it will not be necessary to wait 20 years for someone to bitterly recognize, in the year 2019, that this war was a lamentable error. This has happened before, but not before 4 million Vietnamese and 50 thousand Americans had to die. We sincerely hope that a just, dignified and lasting peace will be re-established for all the peoples that built a fraternal federation on the ruins of the Second World War and that lived in prosperous harmony for more than 40 years.

The President *(spoke in French)*: The next speaker is the representative of Albania. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nesho (Albania): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your convening of this meeting of the Security Council.

We are present here at this emergency meeting of the Security Council to discuss the damage caused to the Chinese Embassy as a result of bombardments in Belgrade against criminal and brutal regime that is killing, massacring, torturing, raping and is committing genocide against the entire Albanian population of Kosovo. The Albanian Government expressed its regrets and condolences to the Chinese Government over this unfortunate incident, believing that that friendly country, China, has always shown maturity and wisdom on the basis of its foreign policy principles and that it is among the countries promoting progress and development in the world.

Albania would not like for this incident to be used as a pushing force for not punishing the medieval regime in Belgrade and for allowing the wave of crime and conflict to spread in Europe and throughout the world. On the contrary, we must make every effort to prevent our civilization from facing a tragic new history.

After 300,000 people were massacred in Bosnia and Herzegovina and millions were deported, we face today the same reality of 1 million Albanians being deported in the same way — homeless, hopeless and massacred together with their children. The only hope for all of them is the action of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to stop their catastrophe and to ensure their safe return to their land.

The incident that happened yesterday may not respect or be in conformity with international agreements, but those agreements have been completely and constantly violated by the Belgrade regime through crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and genocide against the Albanians of Kosovo and other peoples, about whose suffering not much has been said in this debate by some of the speakers.

Any action that serves peace, stability and security in the world and saves humanity cannot be limited, but should be supported by all the countries that respect human values and democracy. We believe that NATO, through its action, is trying to preserve the same principles as those of the United Nations Charter, including the maintenance of peace and international security.

The President (*spoke in French*): The next speaker is the representative of India. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sharma (India): Any damage to a diplomatic establishment, intended or otherwise, is to be entirely deplored. This incident, along with continuing loss of innocent civilian lives and other untoward consequences, including ecological damage and large-scale displacement of people, only confirms that the very fundamentals of the new approach of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are wrong.

The incident also starkly underlines what we in India, along with a good part of the international community, have been emphasizing from the very beginning: that a solution to the problems relating to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is to be found only in means other than the military. Continuous aerial bombardment in the name of humanitarian issues, resulting in the loss of innocent civilian lives and other tragic occurrences, is totally unacceptable. There is no alternative to the path of dialogue and a negotiated settlement.

We also remain seriously concerned about the overall human tragedy that we continue to witness in the region. The world cannot ignore the increased resultant tension in the region and the potential for greater consequential instability. We would therefore urge an immediate end to all hostilities so as to give peace a chance.

We express our sympathy and condolence to the Chinese Government and to the families of the victims.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): We have listened attentively to the statements that have just been made, every one of which expressed sympathy and condolences to the Chinese Government and the families of the victims. For this, we wish to express our thanks.

However, we have also heard an absurd argument made to the effect that, as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) did not intentionally attack the Chinese Embassy and its diplomats, it cannot be charged with violating the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents. We were most astonished by the fact that this remark was made by a senior diplomat.

Facts speak louder than words. Deliberate or not, NATO's action was a blatant flouting of international law. Are we to understand that a killer, merely by arguing that he did not kill deliberately, can escape the punishment of law? I wish to reiterate here that NATO must shoulder full responsibility for its action.

I also wish to inform all members of the Council through you, Sir, that the Chinese delegation has distributed a draft presidential statement. We hope that the Security Council will act on it as soon as possible.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5.05 a.m.